

Message Text

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TAGS ELAB, CO

SUBJ: GOC GRANTS LEGAL STATUS TO THE COMMUNIST LED TRADE UNION
CONFEDERATION OF COLOMBIAN WORKERS (CSTC)

REF: A. BOGOTA A-25 FEB 13/74 B. BOGOTA A-84 MAY 2/74 C. BOGOTA
4688

1. SUMMARY: THE GOC GRANTED LEGAL STATUS AUG 20/74 TO THE TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION OF COLOMBIAN WORKERS (CSTC). THE ENTIRE LOPEZ CABINET APPROVED THE DECISION. LEADERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC LABOR CONFEDERATIONS, THE UNION OF COLOMBIAN WORKERS (UTC) AND THE COLOMBIAN WORKERS CONFEDERATION (CTC) EXPECTED THE GOC ACTION, BUT NEVERTHELESS RESENTED IT, SINCE THE NATIONAL FRONT GOVTS HAD CONSISTENTLY REFUSED TO GRANT THE CSTC LEGAL STATUS, IN PART TO GIVE THE UTC AND CTC AN ADVANTAGE OVER THE COMMUNIST RUN CSTC. THE MINLAB TOLD THE EMB AUG 22 THAT THE LOPEZ INITIATIVE WAS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO MAKE LABOR'S PARTICIPATION BROADBASED AND EFFECTIVE IN THE TRI-PARTITE COMMISSION WITH GOVT AND BUSINESS ON A SALARIES INCOME AND PRICES POLICY. SHE THOUGHT THAT THE CSTC'S OPEN DEALINGS WITH EMPLOYERS AND GOVT ALONGSIDE THE UTC AND CTC WOULD PROMOTE TRADE UNION UNITY. SHE ADDED THAT A STRONG LABOR ORG WAS ONE OF THE KEYS TO DEVELOPMENT. THUS, THE CONCEPT OF A GOVT-SPONSORED TRADE UNION UNIFICATION EFFORT HAS AGAIN BEEN RAISED AS IT WAS BY PRES LOPEZ DURING THE RECENT

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ELECTION CAMPAIGN. AT THAT TIME THE UTC AND CTC TOLD LOPEZ THAT

UNITY IS UP TO THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND NOT FOR THE GOVT TO DECIDE.
END SUMMARY.

2. THE GOC GRANTED LEGAL STATUS AUG 20/74 TO THE TRADE UNION
CONFEDERATION OF COLOMBIAN WORKERS (CSTC). WHILE THE OFFICIAL ACTION
WAS TAKEN BY THE MINLAB MARIA ELENA DE CROVO, THE ENTIRE LOPEZ
CABINET APPROVED THE DECISION.

3. MOST LABOR OBSERVERS, INCLUDING THE LEADERS OF THE UNION OF
COLOMBIAN WORKERS (UTC) AND THE COLOMBIAN WORKERS CONFEDERATION
(CTC) EXPECTED THE LOPEZ ADMIN TO TAKE EARLY ACTION TO REMOVE
THE LEGAL PROHIBITION AGAINST THE CSTC. IN FEB 74 DURING A CAMPAIGN
SPEECH REF A, LOPEZ CALLED FOR A UNIFIED LABOR MOVEMENT IN ORDER
TO HELP HIM COMBAT INFLATION. HE SAID, "THE FIRST STEP TO COMBAT
THE INCREASING COST OF LIVING IS TO BE ABLE TO HAVE SOMEONE TO
TALK TO, TO NEGOTIATE THE INCREASES IN SALARIES THAT WILL BE
NECESSARY IN THE COMING PERIOD, WITHOUT THE NEED FOR STRIKES...I PRO-
POSE TO STIMULATE UNIONS IN ALL AREAS, BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT IT
IS MOST IMPORTANT TO CHANNEL THE ASPIRATIONS OF WORKERS..."
FOR THE OVER ALL BENEFIT OF COLOMBIA. AND, HE ADDED, "IN ORDER
FOR LABOR TO BE AN EFFECTIVE BARGAINING PARTNER IT MUST BE UNIFIED,
AT LEAST IN PRINCIPLE."

4. FOLLOWING HIS ELECTION, LOPEZ SENT LETTERS TO THE UTC AND
CTC ON MAY 23, REF C, REQUESTING THEM TO NAME REPS TO PARTICIPATE
IN TRI PARTITE NEGOTIATIONS WITH BUSINESS AND GOVT TO ESTABLISH
AN INCOMES, SALARIES AND PRICES POLICY. IN THESE LETTERS HE STATED
THAT HE FAVORED "A STRONG LABOR ORG" WHICH SEEMED TO IMPLY THAT
THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE BROADER LABOR REPRESENTATION (CSTC)
THAN THAT OF THE TWO DEMOCRATIC ORGS.

5. FINALLY, IN A MTG WITH UTC AND CTC LEADERS ON JUNE 14
LOPEZ DISCUSSED IN GENERAL TERMS HIS IDEAS ON CONTROLLING INFLATION.
DURING THIS MTG, HE SAID THAT HE DID NOT INTEND TO DEAL WITH A
LARGE NUMBER OF PERSONS OR ENTITIES. BUT, HE SAID: "I WILL
NOT AT THIS TIME DISCUSS THE SITUATION OF THE OTHER LAB ORGS
(THE CSTC) BECAUSE THIS WILL BE A TASK FOR THE NEXT GOVT (HIS)
AND THE NEW MINLAB."

6. YET, EVEN WITH THE CLEAR EXPECTATION OF THE GOC'S ACTION,
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UTC AND CTC LEADERS FEEL SOMEWHAT BETRAYED. SUCCESSIVE NATIONAL
FRONT GOVTS HAD CONSISTENTLY DENIED LEGAL STATUS TO THE CSTC
SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 64. IN PART, THE GOVTS' ACTIONS WERE
DESIGNED TO PROTECT THE DEMOCRATIC CENTERS FROM COMMUNIST PENE-
TRATION AND TO GIVE THEM AN ADVANTAGE IN ORGANIZING WORKERS.
YET, THESE GOVTS' ACTIONS WERE SOMEWHAT NULLIFIED BY THE FACT
THAT CSTC AFFILIATES ALWAYS HAD LEGAL STATUS AND OPERATED ONLY.
IN ADDITION, THE NATIONAL FRONT GOVTS' ANTI COMMUNIST MANEUVERS

PROBABLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONTINUING DIVISIVENESS BETWEEN THE LEADERS OF THE UTC AND CTC, WHICH, IN TURN WEAKENED THEIR ORGS.

7. FOLLOWING THE RECOGNITION OF THE CSTC, THE MINLAB ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOC BUSINESS AND LABOR REPS WOULD SHORTLY BEGIN DISCUSSING THE INCOMES, SALARIES AND WAGES POLICY. EL TIEMPO REORTED AUG 22/74 THAT MIN DE CROVO SAID: "THE GOVT WAS ONLY WAITING FOR THE LEGALIZATION OF THE REPS OF ALL THE COLOMBIAN WORKERS-- GRANTING LEGAL STATUS TO THE CSTC--IN ORDER TO ENTER INTO DISCUSSIONS WHICH WILL DEFINE THE INCOMES AND SALARIES POLICY." LEADERS OF THE THREE CENTERS REACTED FAVORABLY TO THE MIN'S ANNOUNCEMENT.

8. DURING HIS COURTESY CALL, THE MIN TOLD THE AMB AUG 22 THAT CSTC LEGAL STATUS WAS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO MAKE LABOR'S PARTICIPATION

IN THE TRIPARTITE COMMISSION WITH GOVT AND EMPLOYERS ON AN INCOMES, SALARIES AND PRICES POLICY, BROAD-BASED AND EFFECTIVE. SHE SAID THAT THE GOC HAD NO LEGAL REASON TO DENY THE CSTC LEGITIMACY, SINCE IT MET THE REQUIREMENTS, AND THAT ITS POLITICAL IDEOLOGY COULD NOT BE A FACTOR, UTC AND CTC PROTESTATIONS TO THE CONTRARY. SHE THOUGHT THAT THE OPEN PARTICIPATION OF THE CSTC IN DISCUSSIONS WITH EMPLOYERS AND GOVT, RIGHT ALONGSIDE THE UTC AND CTC, MIGHT LEAD TO TRADE UNION UNITY. CITING THE EXAMPLES OF THE BRITISH AND US LABOR MOVEMENTS, MIN DE CROVO SAID THAT A STRONG LABOR MOVEMENT WAS ONE OF THE KEYS TO DEVELOPMENT.

9. THE IMMEDIATE CONCERN OF THE UTC AND CTC IS HOW THE LOPEZ ADMIN WILL DIVIDE LABOR REPRESENTATION ON THE VARIOUS INSTITUTES, E.G., THE SOCIAL SECURITY INSTITUTE (ICSS) AND NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP

INSTITUTE (SENA) THAT HAVE UNTIL NOW BEEN THE EXCLUSIVE DOMAIN OF THESE TWO CONFEDERATIONS. FOR THE LONGER TERM THE CDOTERS MUST CONSIDER HOW TO COMBAT LIKELY CSTC EFFORTS, BOLSTERED BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE INCREASED PRESTIGE AND RESPECTABILITY, AND GREATER OPERATING ROOM AFFORDED BY ITS LEGAL STATUS, TO WIN OVER UTC AND CTC AFFILIATES. IN ADDITION, THERE IS THE STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT THE LOPEZ-SPONSORED ACTION MAY BE THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS HIS STATED INTENTION OF UNIFYING THE LABOR MOVEMENT. THE UTC AND CTC LEADERS HAVE ALREADY TOLD LOPEZ THAT THIS IS UP TO THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND NOT FOR THE GOVT TO DECIDE (SEE REF B). A TEST OF WILLS MAY BE IN THE MAKING. VAKY

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